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BY AUTHORITY
BY Lawrence F. Proctor
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Unclassified Memo
Subj: Iwo Jima JMWTF Records

ANNEX JIG
TO
FOURTH MARINE DIVISION
OPERATIONS REPORT
IWO JIMA
4th TANK BATTALION
REPORT

NOT AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED
DD FORM 5300-10

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HEADQUARTERS,
FOURTH TANK BATTALION, FOURTH MARINE DIVISION,
FMF., c/o FLEET POST OFFICE, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA.

Serial No. 34-45.

18 April, 1945.

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From: The Commanding Officer.
To: The Commanding General, Fourth Marine Division.

Subject: Operation Report, Iwo Jima.

Reference: (a) Div SOP #1-45.
(b) Special Air and Gunnery Target Map, Iwo Jima,
1:10,000.
(c) Table of Organization, F-79.

1. In accordance with paragraph two (2), reference (a), the following report is submitted.

I PLANNING AND PREPARATION

1. Training period between the Tinian Operation and the Iwo Jima Operation was largely devoted to acquainting personnel of this organization with new equipment. Due to the fact that Tanks, U. S. Army, medium, M4A2, were replaced by Tanks, U.S. Army, medium, M4A3, approximately forty (40) per cent of the training time was spent on basic subjects such as driving and maintenance. Concomitant with the driving and maintenance training, instruction in the 500 series FM radio equipment and the mechanized flame thrower E 4-5 was carried out.

2. The M4A3 tanks were equipped with all the necessary instruments for indirect fire and a school in indirect fire technique was conducted by the Fourteenth Marines. Due to the time factor this school was abandoned, but all tank companies fired at least two indirect fire problems.

3. Approximately twenty (20) per cent of the training period was devoted to weapons firing and gunnery. All personnel of this organization fired their individual weapons on at least three (3) different occasions. All tank crews fired all tank weapons, and all crews had a minimum of two (2) days on the range.

4. Approximately thirty (30) per cent of the training period was devoted to Infantry-Tank team training. Conferences were held by each tank company's officers with the infantry officers of their respective combat teams. In these conferences basic instruction in tank capabilities, limitations, and cooperation

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ere given, infantry-tank coordination, liaison and communication discussed, and plans for the Iwo Jima operation drawn up. All infantry companies received schooling at the tank park in the use of the tank telephone, arm and hand signals, target designation etc. Following this indoctrination school small unit problems were conducted, and later problems which included firing were held with each BCT.

5. Approximately ten (10) per cent of the training period was devoted to athletics and physical conditioning. Programs in baseball, softball, basketball, touch football, swimming, tennis and track were conducted. This organization did not participate in the rehearsal conducted in the training area.

II MOVEMENT TO OBJECTIVE

1. Tank companies were embarked in ten (10) LSM's. Headquarters and Service Company plus Tank Maintenance Platoon, Ordnance Company, attached were embarked on the APA 190 and the Battalion Commander and three (3) enlisted men were embarked on the Division Command Ship APA 33. This organization did not participate in the forward area rehearsal except for a communication check. The LSM's executed required control exercises, but did not beach.

III SHIP TO SHORE MOVEMENT

1. The assault tank companies (Companies "A" and "C") were loaded as per table below. Company "A" was attached to BCT 25 and Company "C" to BCT 23.

COMPANY "A"				
LSM	LSM	Unit		Position
Serial No.	No.	Embarked:	Vehicles Embarked	on LD
11	323	4th Flat.	3 Medium Tanks	Center
		3rd Flat.	1 Flame Thrower Tank	Blue Beach
		Co, Hq.	1 Flail Tank, Exec's Tank	One
12	70	1st Flat.	3 Medium Tanks	Left Flank
		3rd Flat.	3 Medium Tanks	Blue Beach
				One
13	74	2nd Flat.	3 Medium Tanks, 1 Flame	
			Thrower Tank	Right Flank
		Co, Hq.	1 Dozer Tank, C.O.'s Tank	Blue Beach

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COMPANY "C"

ISM Serial No:	LSM No.:	Unit Embarked:	Vehicles Embarked	Position on LD
14	216	1st Plat.	3 Medium Tanks, 1 Flame Thrower Tank	Right Flank:
		Co, Hq.	1 Lozer Tank, C.O's, Tank	Yellow Bea- ch Two.
15	126	2nd Plat.	3 Medium Tanks	Left Flank:
		3rd Plat.	3 Medium Tanks	Yellow Bea- ch Two.
16	211	4th Plat.	3 Medium Tanks, 1 Flame Thrower Tank.	Yellow Beach One.
		Co, Hq.	1 Flail Tank, ExecO's Tank	

2. This loading plan maintained the tactical unity of the tank units, and was so designed to permit tank units to move to the support of assigned BLT's without confusion on the beach.

3. The six (6) LSM's carrying the assault tank companies were to be in position on the LD by H plus 10 and were to constitute the seventh wave. They were on call by the ROT Commanders and were to be dispatched by Transport Division Control.

4. The reserve tank company (Company "B") with the retrievers of the assault tank companies, the Battalion Command Tank and one spare tank was embarked on LSM's number 48, 59, 239, and 145, and was to stand by in LSM Area Nan.

5. Company "A" was dispatched at 1003 Dog day, and landed on Beach Blue One at 1020. Company "C" was dispatched at 0948, and landed on Yellow Beaches at 1005.

IV NARRATIVE OF OPERATION

1. Dog day: Previously planned arrangements failed, where-in Company "B" of (Second Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion) would pass beach information to Company "C" or this organization and Company "A", Second Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion would give information to Company "A". Company "A" received word that the area 200 yards inland and South of Beach Blue One was mined. Company "C", beach reconnaissance units reported Yellow Beaches

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too soft for landing of tanks and beach exits mined and blocked by shell craters. These units advised that the landing of tanks on Yellow Beaches be delayed until suitable beaching areas and exit routes could be found. The LSM's carrying Company "A" vehicles beached in exactly the opposite order from the plan shown in the table in paragraph III, 1; this caused confusion and made it necessary for tank platoons to cross over in order to support the BLT's, to which they were assigned. The tanks landed under a hail of artillery, mortar and anti-tank fire; all three LSM's were hit and damaged. The Company "A" dozer cut a road through the first terrace inland from Beach Blue One, but hit a large horn mine and received three large caliber direct mortar hits. The dozer was completely destroyed. Company "A" tanks proceeded inland in a column picking their way through shell craters. They encountered a mine field 100 yards inland and were immobilized. The Company "A" tanks fired into the cliff vicinity TA 165 D and E, 166 A and B and 183 U, V, W, and X, and into pill boxes in rear of Blue Beaches. At How plus five (5) hours the First, Third, and Fourth Platoons of Company "B" landed on Beach Blue One to reinforce Company "A"; two Headquarters tanks of Company "B" and the Company "A" retriever landed with this group. Intense artillery and mortar fire continued all day and by How plus seven (7) hours, seven Company "A" tanks were bogged down and five (5) had been knocked out. One Company "B" tank was stuck in a shell hole, and one was hit by 47 mm AT fire and burned. At How plus seven (7) hours the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer and First Platoon Leader of Company "A" were wounded and evacuated and the Commanding Officer of Company "B" assumed command of all tanks in the zone of action of RCT 25. Tanks in this RCT zone bivouaced in an area 25 to 100 yards in rear of the front lines. By nightfall Company "A" had sustained thirty (30) casualties. On the Yellow Beaches the tanks of Company "C" had great difficulty due to the loose volcanic ash which immobilized many vehicles and restricted the movement of others. LSM 216 beached at its assigned point on the right flank of Yellow Two, and the first tank off bogged down less than five feet from the ramp's end, blocking the remaining tanks in that vessel. LSM 216 retracted and beached again about 200 yards south where foot reconnaissance showed that tanks would also bog down. The LSM in the meantime had beached on the beach, and it took thirty (30) minutes for it to retract the second time. At 1245 LSM 216 beached on Yellow One, but the sand was too soft, so it withdrew for the third time, and at 1300 beached again discharging its remaining vehicles. LSM's 126 and 211 beached at their assigned spots and were able to discharge their vehicles with little difficulty. Three tanks from LSM 126 struck mines less than 150 yards from the beach, and the remaining three moved to the support of BLT 1/23 finally reaching the No. 1

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Airfield just south of the East-West runway turning apron. The tanks from LSM 211 working slowly among mines and shell holes reached the airfield at about noon. The flail which was on this LSM bogged down in soft sand just off the beach. The tanks from LSM 216 also finally made their way to the Airfield knocking out several pillboxes with the CB MK I flame thrower. No tanks were able to operate in the zone of BLT 2/23 due to soft sand though several efforts were made to get vehicles into that zone. Eleven (11) tanks and two (2) flame throwing tanks from Company "C" cooperated with BLT 1/23 until dark when they took up positions in hull defile just off the edge of the airfield in TA 164 X and Y. LSM 59, carrying the Second Platoon of Company "B", the Company "B" dozer and the Battalion Commander tank, was ordered to beach on Yellow On to reinforce Company "C" at 1400. This LSM was forced to withdraw due to mortar fire after discharging only two vehicles, one of which bogged down on the beach. The other vehicle joined Company "C".

2. Dog Plus One Day: The Commanding Officer of Company "B" who had assumed command of all tanks in the zone of RCT 25 was wounded and evacuated early in the morning, and the En-3 was ordered ashore to assume command of Company "B". At the same time the Assistant En-3 was ordered ashore to take command of Company "A" and the Battalion Reconnaissance and Liaison Officer to be Executive Officer of Company "A". These officers reached the beach at about noon. Company "A" spent most of the day reorganizing and retrieving damaged and bogged down vehicles, and had eight operative vehicles by dark. Eight (8) tanks from Company "B" supported RCT 25 firing on targets of opportunity. Company "C"'s eleven (11) operational vehicles were divided into three (3) platoons which led the assault companies of RCT 23 across Airfield No. 1. These vehicles could not negotiate the bluff on the NW side of the airfield, and attempts to advance up the taxiways toward Airfield No. 2 were stopped by mines in TA 165 C and 181 X. Three Company "C" vehicles were knocked out, two by mines and one by heavy mortar fire. The remaining vehicles from LSM 59 landed and joined Company "C" at nightfall.

3. Dog Plus Two Days: Companies "A" and "B" supported RCT 25 with all operational vehicles firing into the cliffs to the front and destroying pill boxes and caves. Two (2) Company "B" vehicles were knocked out by 47 mm AT fire and two threw tracks. These companies bivouaced in TA 165 for the night. Twelve (12) vehicles of Company "C" supported the attack of RCT 23 and reached

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the high ground across from Airfield No. 1 via the road running from CR 230 through TA 181 Y after this road was cleared of mines. The dozer tank pushed a road to the ridge in TA 182 K where it was knocked out by 47 mm AT fire. The Battalion Maintenance Officer landed with nine (9) mechanics to survey the damage and to aid the Companies in maintenance work. The Assistant Platoon Leader of the Tank Ordnance Platoon also landed with nine (9) enlisted men to aid the Battalion Maintenance Officer.

4. Dog Plus Three Days: Companies "A" and "B" supported the attack of RCT 25, but were limited by cliffs and rough terrain. One section of tanks cleared some enemy troops from the area adjacent to the East Boat Basin. Company "C" was attached to RCT 21, and operated in the same area as preceding day. Two (2) tanks were knocked out by 47 mm AT fire.

5. Dog Plus Four Days: Companies "A" and "B" performed the same missions as the day preceding. Company "C" worked up to the southern end of Airfield No. 2 at TA 182 G, and from positions on the runway destroyed enemy positions in TA 182 B. One tank was knocked out by 47 mm AT fire. The Battalion Commander and his liaison party landed at about noon, and set up his CP in the Company "C" bivouac area at TA 164 Y. Two enlisted men from Tank Ordnance Platoon landed with maintenance equipment.

6. Dog Plus Five Days: Company "B" sent four tanks to support BLT 1/24 at the East Boat Basin. All operational vehicles of Companies "A" and "C" (20 tanks in all) were placed under the command of the Commanding Officer of Company "C" to participate in massed tank attack, ordered by higher echelon, with the purpose of securing Airfield No. 2. All available tanks of the Third and Fifth Tank Battalions were to participate in this attack which was under the command of the Commanding Officer, Fifth Tank Battalion. The general plan was for the Fourth Tank Battalion to attack down the right runway and the Third and Fifth Tank Battalions to move down the left runway. As it turned out the only route on to the Airfield was the one made by Company "C" several days previous from CR 230 to the runway at TA 182 G. The morning was spent in clearing this route of mines and in untangling traffic jams caused by the canalizing of some heavy tanks into this narrow corridor. A column of tanks extended from one airfield to the next. Eventually eight (8) tanks from Company "A" got onto the runway and progressed as far as TA 185 B and 200 V destroying four (4) AT guns and ten (10) pill boxes. Two tanks were destroyed by 47 mm AT fire and three damaged. Small numbers of vehicles from the Third and Fifth Tank Battalions also eventually reached the airfield and advanced

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down the left runway. For all practical purposes Airfield No. 2 was secured. Company "C" was relieved at dark by elements of the Third Tank Battalion and reverted to RCT 23. Two CP maintenance men from Headquarters and Service Company landed.

7. Dog Plus Six Days: Company "A" was in reserve and spent the day in maintenance. Company "B" sent two tanks to the East Boat Basin and six (6) tanks stood by to support BLT 3/24, but were not called on. Company "C" supported the attack of BLT 3/23 against Hill 382. These tanks fired close support missions from TA 183 G and 200 W where they were held up by an extensive minefield. Three officers and twenty two (22) enlisted men from Headquarters and Service Company landed and set up the Battalion dump. One officer and eleven (11) enlisted men from the Tank Ordnance Platoon also landed.

8. Dog Plus Seven Days: Six (6) tanks from Company "A" supported the attack of RCT 25 by firing at designated pill boxes and caves. Company "B" was in reserve and spent the day in maintenance. Company "C" again supported the attack on Hill 382. Engineers were unable to clear the minefield in TA 200 W and two tanks were knocked out. Three officers and ten (10) enlisted men from Headquarters and Service Company landed on Blue Beach One and the Battalion CP was established at TA 166 O.

9. Dog Plus Eight Days: Company "A" performed the same missions as the preceding day. Second Platoon, Company "B" reverted to Company "B" control and that Company supported the attack of RCT 23 on Hill 382. Company "C" was in reserve and spent the day in maintenance. One officer and twenty one (21) enlisted men from Headquarters and Service Company landed.

10. Dog Plus Nine Days: All Company "A" tanks supported the attack of the left BLT of RCT 25 firing at pill boxes and one block-house which effectively withstood 75 mm fire. Terrain limited tank operation to the zone of this BLT. Third Platoon, Company "B", fired close-in 20 minute preparation prior to King hour in the zone of BLT 2/23. Company "E" fired supporting missions on Hill 382 and the cliffs and ridges to the right. Company "C" was again in reserve.

11. Dog Plus Ten Days: The remainder of Headquarters and Service Company, the Tank Ordnance Platoon and remaining Tank Battalion equipment landed. Company "A" sent two tanks to the right BLT of RCT 25 where they fired close support missions. Six (6)

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operated with the left BLT of RCT 25 against the strong block house encountered the previous day. Approximately 800 gallons of flame thrower fuel and six hundred rounds of 75mm ammunition were fired at the block house, but the infantry was unable to secure it. One tank was knocked out by a land mine; evidently during the night of D + 9 - D + 10 the enemy resumed the trail used the preceding day. Company "B" was attached to RCT 24, but no tanks were called for, or used, due to the extremely rough terrain. Company "C" remained in reserve.

12. Dog Plus Eleven Days: Commanding Officer, Company "A", resumed command of that unit and the Assistant Bn-3 returned to Headquarters and Service Company. Six tanks from Company "A", a flame thrower and a dozer supported the attack of the left BLT of RCT 25. A shape charge was thrown on the dozer, but with no appreciable damage. 1,000 gallons of flame thrower fuel and considerable 75mm were again fired at the blockhouse. Three Company "A" tanks supported the right BLT in the same manner as the preceding day. First Platoon, Company "B", supported the attack of BLT 2/24 and Second Platoon supported BLT 3/24. 500 gallons of flame thrower fuel were fired at a blockhouse in the zone of BLT 2/24. Company "C" remained in reserve.

13. Dog Plus Twelve Days: Company "A" was in reserve and devoted the day to maintenance. Company "B" moved its bivouac area to TA 183 P. The First Platoon, Company "B", supported BLT 2/24, and the Third Platoon supported BLT 3/24. 500 gallons of napalm were fired at the same blockhouse fired upon the preceding day. Company "C" attached to RCT 23 fired close support missions in the vicinity of Turkey Knob, using the large flame throwers to advantage. Company "C" bivouac area was moved to TA 182 Y.

14. Dog Plus Thirteen Days: Company "A" moved bivouac area to TA 165 J and remained in reserve. The First Platoon, Company "B", supported BLT 2/24 and Second Platoon supported BLT 3/24. Company "C" carried out the same missions as on the preceding day. The Company "C" dozer was knocked out by a mine.

15. Dog Plus Fourteen Days: Four (4) tanks and two (2) flame throwers from Company "A" worked on a by-passed pocket in the zone of RCT 25, destroying caves and pillboxes and expending over 1,500 gallons of flame thrower fuel. The remaining Company "A" tanks stood by to support the attack of RCT 25 if called. Company "B" furnished close fire support to the attack of RCT 24. Company "C" carried out the same mission as on the preceding day.

16. Dog Plus Fifteen Days: Four (4) tanks and one flame thrower from Company "A" again operated against the pocket in RCT 25's zone of action and three (3) tanks operated with the left

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BLT. The Fourth Platoon, Company "B", supported BLT 3/24 and the Third Platoon supported 2/24. One flame thrower, the Company "E" dozer and one tank were knocked out by mines; this was the last dozer operative in the Battalion. Two Platoons of Company "C" attempted to drive east toward the sea down a corridor running through TA 201 M, N, O, T, K, R, Q, Victor and William. The tanks proceeded east down the road running from CR 331 to RJ 189, but at TA 201 M they were forced off the road by large shell craters and a mine field. These tanks took up positions in field in south-east of TA 201 M and fired at targets of opportunity. The rough terrain would not permit tanks to advance beyond TA 201 M without the aid of a tank dozer, and no dozer was available.

17. Dog Plus Sixteen Days: Company "A" continued to operate in the pocket in RCT 25 zone of action. The First Platoon, Company "B", fired a 15 minute close-in preparation for BLT 1/24. The Third Platoon supported the attack of BLT 2/24. One flame thrower tank was knocked out by a mine. Company "C" with the aid of a dozer borrowed from the Fifth Tank Battalion pushed through to TA 201 S where they were halted by a large mine field. One tank was destroyed by a mine at the RJ in TA 201 L.

18. Dog Plus Seventeen Days: One platoon of Company "A" supported the attack of the left BLT of RCT 25 while another platoon continued to mop up the previously mentioned pocket. The First Platoon, Company "B", supported the attack of BLT 2/24. Company "C" operated in the same area as on the preceding day, but was again halted by mines after a short advance.

19. Dog Plus Eighteen Days: Company "A" performed the same missions as the preceding day. The Second Platoon, Company "B", furnished close fire support for BLT 3/24 throughout the day. Company "C" with the aid of the Fifth Tank Battalion dozer pushed through to the ridge in TA 201 T. One tank was knocked out by a mine, the dozer was damaged by large caliber mortar fire, and one tank was set fire, but not damaged appreciably, by a napalm bomb from support aircraft.

20. Dog Plus Nineteen Days: One platoon of Company "A" supported the attack of the left BLT of RCT 25. One platoon stood by in the center BLT's zone of action. One platoon proceeded up the beach road in front of the right BLT, and supported that units drive toward the sea. Company "B" towed a sled mounted 7.2 inch rocket launcher into the zone of BLT 1/24 and fired twenty (20)

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rockets. After engineers removed mines from the road running from CR 331 to RJ 189 Company "C" moved down to the latter point and gave effective fire support to RCT 23.

21. Dog Plus Twenty Days: One platoon of Company "A" assisted in the mopping up of RCT 25's zone of action. Company "B" was in reserve. One platoon of Company "C" proceeded to RJ 189 and fired supporting fires for RCT 9 against caves in TA 202 M.

22. Dog Plus Twenty-One Days: All tank Companies were on stand-by, but did not operate.

23. Dog Plus Twenty-Two Days: Same conditions prevailed as on the preceding day. Company "E" turned over twelve (12) operational tanks to the Fifth Tank Battalion at 1030; six (6) of these tanks were returned at 1700. Company "C" turned over two flame thrower tanks to the Fifth Tank Battalion.

24. Dog Plus Twenty-Three Days: One platoon of Company "A" plus the repaired Dozer from Company "C" operated in support of RCT 25 in TA 185 B and C. Companies "E" and "C" remained on stand-by.

25. Dog Plus Twenty-Four Days: Battalion embarked all operational tanks less one platoon and the two flame throwers from Company "A", the two flame throwers from Company "C" (loaned to Fifth Tank Battalion) and six tanks from Company "B" (also loaned to Fifth Tank Battalion) aboard the LSD#2 along with four officers and seventy five (75) enlisted men.

26. Dog Plus Twenty-Five Days: Company "A" supported the attack of RCT 25 with two tanks and one flame thrower. Company "B", with a tank and a flame thrower borrowed from Company "A" supported BLT 3/24 in reducing the pocket along the East Coast. Remainder of Company "C" embarked aboard the APA 228.

27. Dog Plus Twenty-Six Days: One flame thrower tank was turned over to Third Tank Battalion after Company "A" conducted school for that Battalion. Company "A" loaded its remaining tanks aboard LSD#2 and its personnel were embarked aboard APA 178. Company "B" received four (4) tanks back from the Fifth Tank Battalion.

28. Dog Plus Twenty-Seven Days: Company "B" loaded four (4) tanks aboard LSD#2 and embarked remaining personnel aboard APA 233. Headquarters and Service Company embarked aboard the APA 233. Two tanks and two flame throwers were left with the Fifth Tank Battalion. One flame thrower and two M4A2 tanks were turned over to the

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which had been badly damaged were left with the Third Tank Battalion. Of the fifty-six (56) tanks (dozers, retrievers, flails and flame throwers) embarked for the operation thirty-eight (38) were reembarked at the end; seven (7) were turned over to other units and eleven (11) were destroyed.

V COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATION

1. Personnel losses were higher in this operation than in any preceding one in which this organization has been engaged. The table below shows personnel losses for the operation:

<u>AUTHORIZED T. O. STRENGTH</u>	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>
Marine	35	585)		
Navy	1	9)		
			36	594

ACTUAL STRENGTH ON DATE OF EMBARKATION 28DEC44.

Combat Echelon

	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>		
Marine	37	581)		
Navy	1	11)	38	592)

Rear Echelon

	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>		
Marine	1	56)		
Navy	-	-)	1	56)-

Attachments - TkOrdPlt - Flame Thrower Repairman and Observer

	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>		
Marine	2	30)		
Navy		1:-	3	31)
Army	1)		

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OVERSTRENGTH WITHIN THE BATTALION ON DATE OF EMBARKATION 28DEC44.

	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>		<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enl</u>
Marine	3	54)		3	56		
Navy	-	2)					

CASUALTIES 19FEB45 - 18MAR45

	:KILLED:ND(EV):SK(EV):WD(NOT-EV):MISSING:TOTAL:	
	O: E: O: E: O: E: O: E: O: E: O: E:	
Marine.....	1: 22: 7: 60: : 7: 3: 18: : : 11: 107:	
Navy.....	: 1: : : : : : 3: : : : 4:	

BATTALION PERSONNEL LOSSES 28DEC44 - 18MAR45

	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enl</u>
Killed	1	23	1	23)		
Evacuated						
Battle Casualties	7	60)				
Sick Casualties		9:-	7	69)		
(Incl 2 Ck&Ev Escorts))				
Transferred						11 127
TkCrdPlt.	2	30)				
Army Observer	1)				
College Training		3)	3	35)		
Rear Echelon Tr.		2)				

RETURNED TO DUTY 19FEB45 - 18MAR45

Marines	3	12)		
REPLACEMENTS			3	13
Marine (CP)		1)		

EFFECTIVE STRENGTH ON DATE OF REEMBARKATION 18MAR45

Combat Echelon

	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>		<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>
Marine	32	501)		33	511)
Navy	1	10)			

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	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enlisted</u>	<u>Officer</u>	<u>Enlist</u>
<u>Rear Echelon</u>						
Marine	1	53)				
Navy	-	-)	1	53)-	34	565
Attachments *))		
Navy		1)-		1)		

- * Army Observer detached - 12 March, 1945.
- Tank Ordnance Platoon detached - 13 March, 1945.

RECAPITULATION

122 casualties	Battalion - 122/687 or .177
killed	Battalion - 24/687 or .034
<u>Company "A"</u>	48 CASUALTIES
casualties	Company - 48/176 or .286
killed	Company - 6/176 or .034
<u>Company "B"</u>	29 CASUALTIES
casualties	Company - 29/178 or .157
killed	Company - 5/178 or .028
<u>Company "C"</u>	41 CASUALTIES
casualties	Company - 41/179 or .229
killed	Company - 12/179 or .067

CASUAL DISTRIBUTION

1) Gunshot	11	6) Combat Fatigue	3
2) Land Mines	10	7) Grenade	2
3) Burns	8	8) Sorain	2
4) Recoil Wch	6	9) Jap Mortar Fuse	1
5) Mortar & Arty	79		

2. Japanese anti-tank measures encountered on IWO JIMA were unusual in that they closely resembled orthodox anti-tank doctrine of other armies.

- (a) Mine fields were extensive and very effective. They

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were well located, covering all feasible routes of approach for tanks into the interior of the enemy defenses. The fields were located with a view of canalizing tanks into narrow areas which were covered by anti-tank guns. The fields themselves were covered by anti-tank guns, so that removal of mines did not allow easy access to interior positions. The fields were generally covered with automatic weapons, so that mine removal was extremely difficult. Mines were generally deeply buried so that they were hard to detect, and in many cases tanks crossed over fields only to have following tanks detonate the mines. Most fields consisted of shallowly buried yardstick mines under which were unfused aerial bombs of 150 to 250 pounds. The yardstick mine itself was sufficient to break tank tracks, and when it exploded it detonated the bomb which completely destroyed the tanks. A terracotta mine larger than the standard Japanese anti-tank mine was also extensively used. This mine was extremely hard to detect, and had sufficient explosive power to destroy a tank suspension system. One and two pronged horn mines were encountered, but were not particularly effective as they were easily detected and avoided.

(b) Anti-tank guns were generally of the standard 47 mm type, but some large caliber dual purpose guns were encountered. As stated above, anti-tank guns were well sited, and their fire was very effective. The 47 mm had no difficulty penetrating tank armor except on the front slope plate and the turret. Anti-tank gunnery was generally excellent. The gun positions were usually well constructed and well concealed. Guns had good fields of fire and good alternate fields of fire. Most guns had alternate positions, in some cases several, and this allowed the enemy to shift guns, so that located positions would be empty the next day, and our tanks were surprised by fire from previously undetected guns. Fire discipline of 47 mm gun crews was excellent, and few erratic or waste rounds were observed. Japanese medium tanks with 47 mm guns were dug in and used as anti-tank guns.

(c) In lieu of the magnetic anti-tank mine, the enemy used a very effective small shape charge which they generally hurled at the tank. They also used the charge to destroy abandoned tanks in front of the lines. If the hurled shape charge lodged on the tank, it penetrated all hull armor.

(d) Reinforced concrete and lumber placed on tank sprockets, and spare track block welded on turrets and front slope plates proved effective counter measures for both the 47 mm fire and the shape charges.

3. Prior to the Iwo Jima Operation, the following mod-

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ifications were made on M4A3 tanks as received:

- (a) Tank-infantry telephone installed on all tanks.
- (b) SCR 300 radio sets installed in twenty-seven (27) tanks.
- (c) Additional armor plate placed on forward part of right sponson on twenty-four (24) tanks mounting the Mechanized Flame Thrower E 4-5.
- (d) Modification of interior installation of fuel and pressure tanks of Mechanized Flame Thrower E 4-5 (24 tanks).
- (e) Substitution of modified gun for regular E 4-5 flame gun in the twenty-four (24) tanks mounting the flame thrower.
- (f) Installation of anti-mine flails on two (2) M4A2 tanks with dozer attachment.
- (g) Forty-one (41) tanks had spare track blocks spot welded around the turret and carried in brackets on the front slope plates.
- (h) Forty-seven (47) tanks had one spare bogie wheel assembly on a bogie gudgeon spot welded to the front slope plate.
- (i) On fifteen (15) tanks four 2 inch pieces of channel iron were welded to the sponsons and 1 1/2 inch soft pine was cut to the shape of the sponsons and bolted to the channel irons.
- (j) On thirteen (13) tanks 3 1/2 inch lengths of 1/2 inch reinforcing rod were arc welded 6 inches apart over the entire sponson surface. Heavy 1 1/2 inch wire mesh cut to fit the sponson was slipped over the welded rods, and another identical piece of mesh was welded to the rods 2 1/2 inches from the sponson. Three (3) lengths of reinforcing steel were then placed along the entire length of the sponson between the two layers of mesh. Next, 2 inch oak lumber, cut to fit the sponson was bolted to 5/8 inch studs 3 inches long welded to the sponson and 2 inch oak was used to cover the bottom of the air space so formed. A 1-2-3 mixture of concrete was poured in the air space. This modification proved invaluable as it enabled the tanks so equipped to withstand shape charges, explosives and 47 mm AP hits on the sponsons. Tanks not equipped

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in this manner had their sponson armor easily penetrated by 47 mm projectiles and shape charges.

(k) Three (3) tanks had installed on their sponsons three (3) sections of plywood filled with concrete 1 1/2 inch thick. These sections were bolted to brackets welded on to the sponsons and are removable. This modification was not as effective as that described in (j) above.

(l) Six (6) tanks had 1 3/4 inch lumber, cut to fit the sponsons, bolted to brackets welded on the tank so as to form a 3 inch air space. Three (3) tanks had 1/2 inch plywood affixed to the sponson in the same manner.

(m) On fifty-four (54) tanks 1 1/2 inch wire mesh was welded to the top of all hatches.

(n) On two (2) tank recovery vehicles, M32B3, a cover and hatch were constructed over the open turret. This modification is necessary to protect the crew of the M32B3 from small arms fire.

(o) In forty-five (45) tanks the 75 mm ready box on the floor of the turret basket was removed, and 75 mm ready racks installed. This modification permitted the carrying of approximately twenty-five (25) more rounds of 75 mm ammunition.

(p) On twenty-one (21) tanks salvaged M3A1, jettisonable, self-sealing gas tanks were mounted in jettison brackets affixed to the top rear of the hull. A pipe with valve is fitted to the rubber tank, and leads down to the lower rear end of the tank hull. These tanks were used to carry water for supported infantry.

(q) On ten (10) tanks the vision cupola of the tank commanders turret hatch was rotated 45° clockwise. This allows the hatch to open to the rear instead of the right side, and keeps branches, wire, etc. from hitting the hatch. This modification should be incorporated in all tanks.

(r) Thirty-four (34) tanks had from three (3) to four (4) pieces of rod 1 inch by 9 inch welded upright to the front slope plate. The towing cable is coiled around these rods, with one end remaining fixed to the bow towing shackle, and is thus made more accessible.

(s) Fifteen (15) tanks had wooden removable plugs in

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serted into the 2.1 inch mortar, M3 barrel. It is believed that Marine Corps Ordnance should design a metal plug for this purpose. The plug is to prevent the enemy from dropping grenades or explosives into the mortar barrel.

(t) On sixteen (16) tanks the tank commander's periscope was lengthened from 3 to 5 inches to give increased vision.

(u) Eighteen (18) tanks had their deck escape hatch modified by cutting the hatch in two, hinging it to the deck armor and securing it from the inside.

(v) Six (6) other modifications were made on some tanks, but there are only minor differences between these modifications and others already described.

4. This organization was provided with an adequate number of maps and other intelligence data for the Iwo Jima operation. Due to the great inaccuracy of the basic map, however; it was of little use in reconnaissance or target designation. Since it is extremely important for tank units to know as much detail as possible about terrain well in advance of feasible foot reconnaissance limits, it is recommended that tank units be furnished daily (or as the progress of the attack dictates) the latest available, low-altitude, oblique aerial photographs with the target square system over printed. Beach conditions, as reported by UDT personnel, proved very inaccurate, however; if sufficient time had been allotted to Tank Battalion Beach Reconnaissance Teams, prior to the dispatching of the LSM's, it is believed that much of the difficulty encountered from soft sand could have been avoided.

5. Communications for the Iwo Jima operation were excellent except for a general disregard for communication security. It is believed this disregard stems from three sources: Many radio operators were line duty personnel; they had received very little communication training; all hands were relatively unfamiliar with new type radio equipment used during the operation. Satisfactory direct communication between assault tanks and assault infantry was provided by SCR-300 (AN/VRC-3) radios within command tanks, and by the tank-infantry telephone system installed in each tank. In this connection, it is recommended that all tanks be equipped with SCR-300 radios to prevent the loss of necessary communication which occurs when a command tank is disabled. Command tanks were made conspicuous by the AN/VRC-3 double antennae installation. The

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system of radio nets (circuits) and frequencies assigned proved adequate. Highly satisfactory radio maintenance and repair was carried on within the battalion. This organization, with 107 radio equipments and with five control stations, which require the continuous watches of well-trained operators, is authorized (see reference (c) only four (4) CP radio operators. Reference (c) authorized no message center or wire section personnel so line duty men have to be trained for these sections, and removed from their normal jobs. The SCR-510 radio equipment when employed as an SCR-509 portable field set lacks a satisfactory pack-carry for ultra-portable ("walkie-talkie") operation. It is recommended that a suitable pack carry for the radio transmitting and receiving equipment BC-620 be designed. It is further recommended that a cord CD-509 be used to permit the battery case CS-79 to be carried in the left hand. The communications range (in miles) of the SCR-510 radio equipment employed in vehicular operation will probably prove insufficient for liaison purposes in a moving situation. It is recommended that the Tables of Basic Allowances be changed to provide one (1) SCR-508 radio equipment per Tank Company and two (2) SCR-508 radio equipments for Headquarters and Service Company. It is further recommended that suitable dynamotors and mounts be provided for 12-volt vehicular operation of the above radios. The use of 4x4 1/4 ton trucks to transport vehicular radio sets proved unsatisfactory at Iwo Jima due to volcanic ash in which vehicles bogged down even when equipped with chains. It is recommended that the Tables of Basic Allowances be changed to provide one cargo carrier M-29C (weasel) per company. It is further recommended that these weasels be equipped with 12-volt power sources. The BA-70 or BA-80 battery-packs are the only suitable types of power sources for ultra-portable operation of the SCR-300 radio equipment. In a tank (equipped with storage batteries) a vibrator power supply would serve to eliminate the numerous disadvantages of battery-pack operation. It is therefore recommended that a rugged 6, 12 and 24 volt input vibrator power unit for SCR-300 radio equipment be designed. The careful equipping and stocking of a radio maintenance trailer for each company enabled this battalion to do its own radio repair work. No signal equipment from the Fourth Tank Battalion was turned in to the Division Signal Repair Section. This Battalion's Communication Section was able to assist the Third and Fifth Tank Battalions in radio maintenance work. Without the maintenance trailers this could not have been accomplished. It is recommended that a standard radio maintenance trailer be designed and that the Tables of Organization be revised to provide one (1) per company.

6. As stated before all tanks of this organization were embarked in LSM's at the base camp. All tanks beached safely, in spite of all LSM's receiving many artillery and mortar hits. LSM's are probably the best normal means for landings. The difficulties present themselves:

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(a) Due to the LSM's small size and its uncovered tank deck, it takes a great deal of spray, and some sea, aboard even in relatively calm waters. In spite of liberal and frequent applications of rust preventive, considerable rust and deterioration results to the suspension system.

(b) The LSM is an extremely rough rider, even in little sea way, and most of the embarked troops were sea-sick a good part of the time. Quarters for troops are cramped with no space available for school or exercise. Health, combat efficiency and morale suffered as a result.

(c) Due to the fact that LSM's travel in the tractor groups, briefing, conferences, coordination and liaison between tank and infantry units are rendered very difficult. It is believed that most of these difficulties could be overcome by transporting tanks from the base to the most forward staging area in AK's, LSD's (not LCM loaded) or even LST's and then transferring them to LSM's for the final, short move to the objective.

7. Supplies in Class I, II and IV were adequate throughout the operation. On Dog plus Ten (10) days a fifty (50) per cent allowance of clothing was issued to troops. Individual equipment lost or destroyed, was replenished the same day. On Dog plus Twenty one (21) days clothing was issued to twenty-five (25) per cent of the troops in the greatest need. The Battalion was subsisted on "K" rations for the first two days and on "C" rations and some 10-IN-ONE through Dog plus Sixteen (16) days. On Dog plus Seventeen (17) days, portable flyproof galleys were set up in each company area, and after an inspection by the Battalion Surgeon, "B" rations were issued. Ammunition, as usual, was plentiful with the exception of 75 mm HE supercharge. As a result this organization was forced to use normal charge HE which is normally used in the 75 mm tank gun only for indirect fire missions. The following ammunition was expended by the Fourth Tank Battalion during the operation:

Caliber .30, belted- - - - -	1, 316, 575 rounds.
75 mm gun, HE, super charge W/M 48 fuse- -	1, 895 rounds.
75 mm gun, APC, with PD fuse M66A1 - - - -	1, 395 rounds.
75 mm gun, HE, normal charge - - - - -	3, 282 rounds.
75 mm gun, WP, - - - - -	1, 472 rounds.

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No accurate count was made of caliber .45 ball or of caliber .50 ammunition expended, but very few rounds were fired. A small number of T 105 fuses were expended.

8. Due to the rugged terrain encountered on Iwo, orthodox infantry-tank tactics had to be abandoned. Tank tactics were improvised, and in many cases basic principles of employment were disregarded. This was never done because of ignorance of fundamentals; it was done because the tactical situation warranted certain calculated risks. Tank units were eager to support the infantry, and they did everything physically and mechanically possible to furnish that support. If it is certain that tank support of infantry and vice versa was less on Iwo than in previous operations, it is equally certain that the terrain encountered made this situation a foregone conclusion. Errors were made by tank units and by the infantry units they were supporting, but these errors were realized at the time, and corrective measures were immediately initiated. Some tactical errors were easily traceable to the loss of so many key personnel in both the RCT's and the Tank Battalion.

9. Experience gained on Iwo Jima, weighed with previous combat lessons, justifies the following additional comments and recommendations.

(a) Tank, Army, medium, M4A3 should be replaced by Tank Army, heavy, M 26 (also known as Tank, Army, medium T 26, T 26-E1 and General Pershing). M4 series tanks are extremely vulnerable to 47 mm AT fire, magnetic mines, shape charges and field artillery. This is especially true in operations against a well manned, heavily fortified position, or in a slow moving situation over difficult terrain where the M4 loses its maneuverability. The gun 75 mm M3, Tank, the primary armament of the M4 series tank is not effective against well constructed reinforced concrete positions. The M4 series tank, with its increased weight from many modifications and its narrow track and bogie-volute suspension system has too much ground pressure to successfully negotiate loose sand or heavy going. The M26 presents the following advantages over the M4.

(1) It is shorter, wider and lower, presenting a lower silhouette; in spite of this, it weighs 44 tons, the additional weight being caused by increased armor. Since it is now evident that M4 series tanks can not safely be loaded in LCM's, this increased weight would not effect the use of the M26 in Amphibious Operations.

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(2) The M 26 travels at the same speed as the M4, the former's design should give it greater maneuverability and action.

(3) The primary armament of the M 26 is a high velocity 90 mm gun, which should be much more effective against fortified positions and enemy armor than the 75 mm.

(4) The M 26 has torsion bar suspension with six (6) large independently sprung bogies and very wide tracks which should give it excellent floatation.

(5) The M 26 has a rear drive sprocket. The M4's prominent front drive sprocket is very vulnerable to shell fire and is easily damaged in breaching obstacles.

(b) The number of tanks in a platoon should be increased to four (4) including one Bulldozer, tank mounting. This would enable the Platoon Leader to employ his platoon as sections in assault on fortified positions. The dozer is invaluable, and is essential in heavy going. The present allowance of one dozer per company is woefully inadequate.

(c) The CB, MKI flame thrower was probably the most valuable single weapon employed on Iwo Jima in spite of considerable mechanical failures. It is recommended that a four (4) tank platoon of CB, MKI or some similar flame throwing tank be added to TO F-76. It is further recommended that appropriate maintenance and servicing equipment, tools and spare parts be provided. The present allowance of E 4-5 flame throwers is adequate and would lend itself well to the platoon organization mentioned in (b) above, providing one E 4-5 per section.

(d) One tank-mounted 7.2 inch rocket launcher should be added to TO F-76 for reduction of fortified positions and tank obstacles.

(e) The CinCPAC unit of fire is inadequate in that it contains too little HE and too much AP. Most firing as in all past operations, was done with HE. It is recommended that the unit of fire for a medium tank should be:

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75 rounds - 75 mm HE, supercharge, W/M 48 fuse.
25 rounds - 75 mm APC, W/BD fuse M66A1.
20 rounds - 75 mm Cannister.
10 rounds - 75 mm WP (Smoke).

If cannister is not available, then the recommended unit is:

90 rounds - 75 mm HE, supercharge, W/M 48 fuse.
30 rounds - 75 mm APC, W/BD fuse M66A1.
10 rounds - 75 mm WP (Smoke).

Present allowances of caliber .30, caliber .45 and caliber .50 are adequate. Normal charge HE for indirect fire missions could be obtained from a small supply in division dumps when needed. Concrete fuse T-105 should be included in the tank unit of fire.

(f) Headquarters and Service Company maintenance section should be equipped with a tank recovery vehicle M32B3 to facilitate recover and repair. In many instances on Iwo Jima two retrievers were needed on recovery missions, and two were seldom available.

(g) Deep water fording kits were installed on all tanks, but were not needed as all vehicles had a dry ramp on landing. The adapter stacks, which remained on the tanks, afforded protection for tank engines and radiators from near miss mortar and artillery bursts. It is recommended that deep water fording kits be furnished and installed prior to every amphibious operation whether or not reconnaissance and hydrographic information indicate their necessity.

(h) It is recommended that tank battalions be authorized four (4) LVT 3's on the basis of one per company to replace four (4) 2 1/2 ton 6 x 6 trucks. This would give tank units a vehicle capable of rearming and refueling them over very rough terrain or loose sand, and before beach and road conditions could be improved for wheeled vehicles.

(i) One lieutenant, Reconnaissance and Liaison Officer, should be added to TO F-76. In order to properly coordinate infantry-tank attacks it is essential that a tank liaison officer be with each assault BLT and at the RCT CP. The addition of one officer would make this possible. The Company Executive Officer could be sent to the CP, and the Reconnaissance and Liaison Officer the Maintenance Officer to each of the BLT's in a normal attack action.

(j) The Commanding Officer of a tank Company should hold Major and his executive officer should be a Captain.

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